

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

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TAGS: PINT, SHUM, AR

SUBJECT: HUMAN RIGHTS ROUND-UP

REF: (A) BUENOS AIRES 5756, (B) BUENOS AIRES 5672

1. SOME 780 REFUGEES, MOSTLY CHILEAN AND URUGUAYAN, HAVE LEFT ARGENTINA IN THE PAST THREE MONTHS, ACCORDING TO UNHCR SOURCES. THE LATEST TO LEAVE WERE 49 URUGUAYANS WHO LEFT FOR HAVANA SEPT 2. THREE HUNDRED MORE ALREADY HAVE RESETTLEMENT OFFERS OUTSIDE THE COUNTRY AND WILL LEAVE SHORTLY, SOURCES ADD.

2. ALTHOUGH THE ATMOSPHERE AMONG THE REFUGEE COMMUNITY HAD RELAXED SOMEWHAT IN RECENT WEEKS-- PROBABLY BECAUSE THERE HAVE BEEN NO MAJOR INCIDENTS OF PERSECUTION SINCE THE DISAPPEARANCE OF 23 URUGUAYANS IN MID-JULY--A RECENT GOVERNMENT REGULATION ON ILLEGAL ALIENS IS CAUSING NEW ALARM. ON SEPT 2, GOA ANNOUNCED THAT ALL FOREIGNERS WITHOUT PROPER DOCUMENTS WOULD HAVE 60 DAYS IN WHICH TO REPORT TO IMMIGRATION AUTHORITIES. SIMILAR REGULATIONS, DESCRIBED AS NECESSARY TO CONTROL "MIGRATORY FLUCTUATIONS, HAVE BEEN ROUTINELY ANNOUNCED BUT RARELY ENFORCED IN THE PAST. MANY OF THE ESTIMATED 500,000 ILLEGAL RESIDENTS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN WELCOME AS LOW-COST ADDITIONS TO THE LABOR FORCE, PARTICULARLY IN BORDER TOWNS. THIS TIME, HOWEVER, REFUGEES FEAR IT WILL BE USED AGAINST THEM. AS GOA DOES NOT SHARE THE UNHCR'S DEFINITION

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OF A REFUGEE UNDER UN PROTECTION, NOR HAS IT COOPERATED IN

PROVIDING REFUGEES WITH ARGENTINE DOCUMENTS IN THE PAST, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN IF-- AND HOW-- THE GOVT INTENDS TO PRESS COMPLIANCE OR SANCTIONS ON THE SOME 20,000 PERSONS ILLEGALLY IN THE COUNTRY FOR POLITICAL REASONS. UNHCR OFFICIALS HAVE TOLD EMBOFF THAT RIGHT NOW THEIR HANDS ARE TIED AND THEY MUST WAIT TO SEE HOW THE GOVERNMENT ENFORCES THE REGULATION ONCE THE 60-DAY DEADLINE IS UP.

3. LA OPINION REPORTED SEPT 1 THAT AT LEAST 20 ASYLEES ARE HOUSED IN THREE FOREIGN EMBASSIES--AUSTRIA, ITALY AND MEXICO. EX-PRESIDENT HECTOR CAMPORA AND HIS SON HAVE REPORTEDLY NOT REQUESTED SAFE CONDUCT OUT OF THE COUNTRY FROM THE MEXICAN EMBASSY WHERE THEY HAVE BEEN SINCE THE COUP. THE PAPER NOTED THAT A NUMBER OF THE ASYLEES LEAVE THE EMBASSIES OCCASIONALLY TO VISIT FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND GO ABOUT THE CITY APPARENTLY WITH NO MAJOR WORRIES.

4. FORMER UCR LEGISLATORS SOLARI IRIGOYEN AND AMAYA REMAIN DETAINED (SEE REF A) "ALMOST INCOMUNICADO", ACCORDING TO FREINDS, IN FIFTH CORPS HEADQUARTERS. AUTHORITIES SAY THEY ARE STILL STUDYING THE CASE OF THE TWO LAWYERS WHO WERE KIDNAPPED FROM THEIR HOMES AUGUST 17 AND LATER DUMPED AT A POLICE CHECKPOINT IN RIO NEGRO. MEANWHILE, IN A NOTE TO UCR NATIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBERS ON FRIDAY, SEPT 3, AN INTERIOR MINISTRY OFFICIAL REPRIMANDED THEM FOR RELEASING AN APPEAL FOR THE SAFETY OF THE TWO KIDNAPPED LAWYERS AUG 25. THE OFFICIAL GRATUITOUSLY SAID THE THE UCR APPEAL GAVE "A FALSE IMPRESSION OF PARTY ACTIVITIES, WHICH HAD BEEN SUSPENDED IN ORDER TO INSURE INTERNAL PEACE".

5. THE PERMANENT ASSEMBLY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, A GROUP OF RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL PERSONS FORMED LAST DECEMBER, COMPLETED ITS FIRST WORKING DESSION LAST WEEK, SEPT 1, BY INVITING ALL ARGENTINES TO JOIN IN ITS FIGHT FOR "PEACE AND THE RIGHT TO LIVE WITHOUT FEAR". THE SESSIONS WERE DIVIDED INTO FOUR TOPICS: THE RIGHT TO LIVE, SECURITY AND NATIONAL DEFENSE, CONSTITUTIONAL PRECEDENCE, AND THE PROTECTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL FREEDOMS. THE PREVIOUS WEEK, THE ASSEMBLY HAD STRONGLY PROTESTED INCREASING VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN A MESSAGE TO PRESIDENT VIDELA (SEE REF B).

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6. SIGNIFICANTLY, IN A DECLARATION AUG 28, THE BUENOS AIRES LAWYERS ASSOCIATION ADDED ITS VOICE TO THOSE PREVIOUSLY RAISED AGAINST RISING VIOLENCE. CITING THE ASSASSINATION OF GENERAL ACTIS AND THE KIDNAPPING OF SOLARI IRIGOYEN AND AMAYA AS WELL AS THE DISAPPEARANCE OF TWO BUENOS AIRES MEMBER LAWYERS, THE ASSOCIATION REPUDIATED THE RISE OF UNCONTROLLED VIOLENCE AND CALLED ON THE GOVERNMENT TO "LEAD THE COUNTRY BACK TO THE PATH

OF LAW AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES".

7. AN MERICAN PRIEST FROM CORDOBA, TOLD EMBOFF TODAY, SEPT 7, THAT THE FIVE SEMINARIANS ARRESTED WITH FATHER JAMES WEEKS IN EARLY AUGUST ARE STILL IN JAIL IN CORDOBA BUT THAT AUTHORITIES HAVE PROMISED TO DO WHAT THEY CAN TO "ACCELERATE" THE INVESTIGATION. THE PRIEST, FREDERICK KETTNER, PICKED UP STUDENT VISA APPLICATIONS FOR THE SEMINARIANS, WHI WILL CONTINUE THEIR STUDIES IN THE US IF AND WHEN THEY ARE RELEASED.

8. NOTE: HUMAN RIGHTS ROUNDUP SERIES IS NOT INTENDED AS PRIMARY REPORTING INSTRUMENT ON SUBJECT; RATHER, IT IS BEING INITIATED AS DEVICE THROUGH WHICH DEVELOPMENTS NOT NECESSARILY WARRANTING CABLE IN AND OF THEMSELVES CAN BE BROUGHT TO ATTENTION OF DEPARTMENT IN TIMELY FASHION. SERIES WILL ALSO BE USED TO REPORT MINOR DEVELOPMENTS IN ONGOING CASES (SUCH AS SOLARI IRIGOYEN AND AMAYA CASES) WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN SUBJECTS OF SEPARATE REPORTS.
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